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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1470  
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INFO RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC 1271  
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RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC  
RUEHXS/ASEAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2696  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5779  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9356  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 4363  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2320  
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 0805  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 3346

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 MANILA 002465

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR UNDER SECRETARY PDOBRIANSKY  
STATE FOR AMBASSADOR JLANGE  
STATE FOR OES/IHA FOR JKAUFMANN, DSINGER AND RDALEY  
STATE FOR INR/EAP FOR JSTROTZ  
STATE FOR EAP/EX  
STATE FOR M/MED  
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/ICD FOR ROSENBLUM  
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/DL&P FOR MAGINNIS  
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/ITP/AA FOR ALEXANDER  
STATE PASS USDA/FAS/FAA FOR HAGER  
STATE PASS USDA/APHIS/IS FOR HOFFMAN  
STATE PASS USDA/APHIS/VS FOR DUVERNOY  
STATE PASS USDA/ARS/SEPRL FOR SUAREZ  
STATE PASS USAID FOR DCARROLL AND ACLEMENTS  
BANGKOK FOR REO JAMES WALLER  
CIA FOR NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL NIO/EA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [TBIO](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#) [AMGT](#) [AMED](#)

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON AVIAN INFLUENZA - PHILIPPINES

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REF: A) MANILA 2319 B) MANILA 2207 C) MANILA 1567  
D) MANILA 860 E) STATE 023826 F) 05 STATE 209622

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (U) Post's Avian Influenza Task Force met on June 7 to review current initiatives and plans to prepare for a potential outbreak of Avian Influenza in the Philippines. The Task Force is chaired by USAID and includes representatives from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Medical Unit, Management, Consular, Economic, Political, Public Affairs, Peace Corps and JUSMAG. The Ambassador chaired this session of the Avian Influenza Task Force to review status and discuss next steps. End summary.

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Situation Analysis  
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12. (SBU) The Philippines has had no confirmed case of H5N1 to date. The country is at high risk given migratory bird patterns which transit from infected neighboring countries, exotic bird smuggling from Indonesia and back yard farming operations which co-mingle various animals including chickens, ducks and pigs. If an outbreak were to occur, the highly mobile Filipino population could present a significant challenge for AI containment efforts.

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GRP Preparedness Efforts  
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13. (U) The Philippines has a National AI Task Force co-chaired by the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health. Together with private sector groups, the GRP developed a credible national preparedness plan and a communications strategy. However the plan remains under-funded and preparedness initiatives have not penetrated to remote rural areas. Post's Task Force members agreed that surveillance capacity remains weak and would benefit from additional coordinated donor assistance.

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USG Support  
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14. (U) USAID has secured a FY06 budget of \$680,000 to support AI preparedness programs. In addition, Health and Human Services (HHS) has allocated \$1.2 M for AI assistance to the Philippines. USAID is working to strengthen public awareness and is sponsoring Municipal Preparedness Planning Workshops in 33 provinces across the Philippines to educate animal and human health officials about surveillance techniques and containment strategies. USAID will mobilize technical support from NGOs to coordinate community-based

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early warning systems to help protect the Mindanao border, which is a transit point between the Philippines and AI-infected countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. USAID is also printing posters and flyers to provide important information about the AI threat and resources for further information to the broadest possible audience. (The posters and flyers will be printed in several local languages.) In August 2006 USAID will provide technical support to conduct outbreak drills at the local level. On an ongoing basis, Post is working closely with the private sector and the international donor community to leverage funding for key initiatives.

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Post Preparations  
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15. (SBU) The Regional Medical Officer (RMO), together with the AI Task Force, has evaluated threats posed by pandemic influenza and taken prudent precautions to protect the mission community. The Medical Unit has an inventory of 32,000 doses of Tamiflu, which could be provided to mission employees, eligible family members (EFM) and foreign service nationals (FSN) in the event of a serious outbreak. The Task Force discussed the importance of a clear and consistent message to the community on the availability and limitations of the Tamiflu stock to help manage expectations in the event of a pandemic situation. (The Tamiflu is stored in a secure, climate controlled area.) The Medical Unit has ordered personal protective equipment to safeguard the health of its employees in addition to that of the embassy community. It has adequate stocks of emergency supplies and medications in the event of an outbreak to stabilize and treat patients prior to transfer to a hospital facility. The RMO continues to liaise with counterparts in other embassies, representatives from the WHO and CDC, local medical providers and facilities and with the local Department of Health. The Medical Unit has also been

involved with ongoing education efforts within and outside the embassy community regarding infection control measures, importance of yearly flu vaccinations and food handling to reduce the risk of spread in the event of an outbreak of pandemic flu.

¶6. (U) The Management Office (MGT) has spearheaded the effort to prepare tripwires and preparedness plans, which are posted on the Mission's Intranet site. MGT notes that in the event of pandemic influenza, travel restrictions may hinder the mission's ability draw down to essential personnel. The Ambassador underlined the need to be prepared to act quickly, should developments warrant an authorized departure. Task Force members will review the tripwires and incorporate updated contingency plans as necessary.

¶7. (U) The Consular Section has sent out warden messages to advise Americans in the Philippines of prudent preparedness measures. Post is incorporating points on the U.S. Government's National Preparedness Plan for Pandemic Influenza into the next warden message. Additionally, AI

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preparedness will be discussed at the upcoming warden conference on June 30.

¶8. (U) The Economic Section, USAID and USDA have coordinated with government contacts in the Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Department of Environment and Natural Resources to discuss the U.S. Government's National Preparedness Plan for Pandemic Influenza and the importance of counter-AI initiatives in the RP. Post is also working with business contacts to evaluate the potential impact of an AI outbreak on U.S. interests in the RP and on the RP economy itself.

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Next Steps  
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¶9. (U) The Embassy Task Force will organize a town hall meeting in Fall 2006 (after the summer transfer season) for mission employees and eligible family members, to provide an update on preparation plans and respond to any questions or concerns. FCS will join the AI Task Force to provide perspective on U.S. and GRP trade and business interests. The U.S. Veterans Affairs and its Manila VA Clinic will also join the Task Force. A follow-up AI Task Force meeting will be held on June 15 to review tripwires and outbreak preparedness measures. The Ambassador raised AI with the Philippines Secretary of Agriculture and will continue to raise AI in her courtesy calls with members of the Philippine Cabinet. The Ambassador will also stop by a regional AI seminar sponsored by USAID on her upcoming trip to Cagayan de Oro in Mindanao.

KENNEY